

sit down and negotiate a long-term bipartisan plan to avoid another shutdown. From the start, it has been clear that Republicans are not serious about governing.

A party that is serious about governing does not do the things they have done. For example, in the wake of mass shootings by individuals—it is in every newspaper in the country, and it has been for weeks. There were new deaths in Tennessee and Colorado. It doesn't matter. I am sorry to say that we have lost track of where they all are.

Even after these mass shootings, Republicans still want to cut our funding for mental health services. Gee-whiz—how could they do that? The Republican bill cuts funding for substance abuse and mental health services. They blocked research for funding for the Centers for Disease Control to study the cause and effect of gun violence. They are cutting funding for counseling programs in elementary and secondary schools. That is only on one subject. A party that is serious about governing doesn't cut critical funding to our Nation's security. They have cut funding for the Bureau of Tobacco, Alcohol and Firearms, they cut funding to vital cyber-security upgrades and financial agencies. They cut funding for U.S. marshals, the brave men and women who helped to catch those two murderers who escaped from the prison in New York.

A party that is serious about governing doesn't wage war against our Nation's infrastructure. They have cut funding for the Nation's electric grid by 40 percent, leaving our utilities susceptible to cyber attacks. Senate Republicans have cut transit projects all across this country. They have cut funding of the air traffic control system. The list is endless. There are cuts to education, women's health, agriculture, energy, and job training.

If the Republican leader and the Speaker wanted to get serious about governing, they would sit down with us and craft a bipartisan compromise to prevent another government shutdown.

On the bill before us, the Speaker of the House of Representatives has referred to that bill by using a very derogatory word which starts with the letter "s." If the Republican leader and the Speaker want to get serious about governing, then they need to sit down with us so we can craft a bipartisan compromise to prevent another government shutdown. Instead they have already given up. Both the Speaker and the Republican leader have said that what we are going to do is abandon the appropriations process in favor of a continuing resolution, which is a buzzword for failure. Failure is another word for a government shutdown. It is another way to close our government.

By relying on a continuing resolution, it leaves in place sequester cuts and underfunds critical priorities for working American families. Republicans are neglecting their responsibilities. They are not showing up for

work. It doesn't have to be this way. We have time to come up with a balanced solution to keep our government funded. We have 2 months to come together, but a CR will not work. Sequestration will kick in, and it will harm every agency in the government. It will especially hurt the middle class of our country. If they are serious about governing, they will work together with us on appropriations bills rather than ignore us.

Republicans need to sit down and get to work on their most important job, as is dictated by the Constitution.

I apologize to everyone for taking more time than I normally do, but it was brought about by my friend the Republican leader.

I ask the Chair to announce the business of the day.

#### RESERVATION OF LEADER TIME

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the leadership time is reserved.

#### HIRE MORE HEROES ACT OF 2015

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate will resume consideration of H.R. 22, which the clerk will report.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (H.R. 22) to amend the Internal Revenue Code of 1986 to exempt employees with health coverage under TRICARE or the Veterans Administration from being taken into account for purposes of determining the employers to which the employer mandate applies under the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act.

Pending:

McConnell modified amendment No. 2266, in the nature of a substitute.

McConnell amendment No. 2421 (to amendment No. 2266), of a perfecting nature.

McConnell (for Inhofe) amendment No. 2533 (to amendment No. 2421), relating to Federal-aid highways and highway safety construction programs.

McConnell amendment No. 2417 (to the language proposed to be stricken by amendment No. 2266), to change the enactment date.

McConnell amendment No. 2418 (to amendment No. 2417), of a perfecting nature.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the time until 10 a.m. will be divided in the usual form.

Mr. REID. I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The senior assistant legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. INHOFE. Mr. President, I had some time reserved, and I am halfway through that time now. So I will talk a little faster than usual because we have an Armed Services meeting right now, and we are trying get to the bottom of this side agreement that was apparently made with Iran.

I wish to applaud the Senate for taking another step, and that is what we are going to be doing in just a few minutes with the DRIVE Act in Congress with these votes, and tomorrow we expect to see a final vote for passage so we can send it to the House. This will be my sixth reauthorization over the past number of years. These bills are all about compromise. It is hard to do. There are a lot of Members of this body who didn't think they got what they wanted in this bill, and I have to say that I didn't get what I wanted. I suspect that the occupier of the chair didn't get what he wanted, and Senator BOXER didn't get what she wanted. That is not the way this works because this is a bill to get us away from the short-term extensions.

It has been obvious that Members of this body are opposed to moving to a 6-year reauthorization bill and are willing to use any procedural means to slow it down, and that is what happened. If we had not dragged on yesterday, and if we had yielded back some of the time, we could have had these votes that we are about to have now yesterday. If we had done that, we could have final passage today, and it would be sent over to the House before they leave. They are going to leave. That doesn't mean that this is not important. What we are doing today and tomorrow is passing this bill. Even though the House is going home, they all agree that we need a good, long-term bill as soon as they get back. That is why we have a motion before us for a short-term delay—so they will have time to do it.

We will have a good bill for them. We have worked on it for several months. It passed out of committee unanimously. Every Republican and every Democrat voted for it. We will have a chance to do that.

Also, I have State sheets on every State. I can read off how every State benefits from this 6-year reauthorization bill. All you have to do is talk to the Governors, mayors, and the departments of transportation across the country. They fully expected Congress only to deliver piecemeal extensions, as we have in the past.

We have to keep in mind that the last reauthorization bill that we had was in 2005. I remember that vividly because I was the author of the bill. When we passed it, everyone rejoiced. Yesterday the Senator from Minnesota was talking about the tragedy of the fallen bridge in Minnesota, where 13 people died. I told the story about how a bridge in Oklahoma City had a chunk of concrete fall off of it and hit a mother of three children and kill her. You don't want to wait until this happens.

We have bridges in this country—and we have talked about each one of them on the Senate floor during the discussion on this bill—that are deteriorating, and we have to do something about it.

If any Member or the staff of any Member—I know the staffs are all